

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03162 01 OF 02 081519Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 H-01 INR-10 IO-13 PM-05
NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00 NEAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00
(ISO) W
-----117635 081719Z /45S

O R 081445Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8231
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3162

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP PERP MARR LE SY IS PLO
SUBJ: EVOLVING LEBANESE ARMY PLANS FOR MOVEMENT SOUTH

REFS: (A) BEIRUT 3109, (B) BEIRUT 3127

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO ADF "COMMANDER" LT. COLONEL SAMI KHATIB, SYRIANS WILL NOT REPEAT NOT CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN THEIR SOUTHERNMOST OUTPOSTS AND UNIFIL CONTINGENTS IN THE SOUTH, BUT WILL EXERT PRESSURE ON PALESTINIANS SO THAT LEBANESE ARMY CAN MOVE SOUTH. CURRENT PLAN IS FOR FIRST CONTINGENT OF LEBANESE ARMY, SOME 1500 TROOPS, TO MOVE SOUTHWARD THROUGH THE BEKAA TO MARJAYOUN AND POSSIBLY ALSO VIA JEZZINE TO NABATIYAH, THEN TO FAN OUT, WITH ONE MAIN COLUMN MOVING WESTWARD ALONG SOUTH BANK OF LITANI, AND A SECOND ALONG ISRAELI BORDER VIA BINT JEBAYL, TO THE SEA. MOVE MIGHT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 03162 01 OF 02 081519Z

BEGIN AS EARLY AS JUNE 11. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF CALLED ON ARAB DETERENT FORCES (ADF) "COMMANDER" LT. COLONEL SAMI KHATIB JUNE 8. KHATIB HAD BEEN PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN LEBANESE ARMY AND LEBANESE-SYRIAN PLANNING FOR MOVE SOUTHWARD SINCE LATTAKIA SUMMIT MEETING. HE HAS, HOWEVER, NOT REPEAT

NOT BEEN IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH PALESTINIAN LEADERS IN RECENT DAYS, SINCE MEETING OF PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP WITH PRIME MINISTER HOSS AND OTHERS, ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 7, WAS POSTPONED.

3. SYRIAN ARMY WILL NOT MOVE TO THE LITANI. KHATIB SAID THAT SYRIAN ARMY WILL NOT REPEAT NOT MOVE SOUTH OF "RED LINE" EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH. HE SAID THAT SYRIANS HAD WANTED TO MOVE DOWN TO THE LITANI IN LATE 1976-EARLY 1977, BUT THAT ISRAELIS HAD PREVENTED IT AT THAT TIME. ISRAELIS MIGHT BECOME INTERESTED IN HAVING THE SYRIANS MOVE DOWN TO LITANI NOW, BUT THEY COULD NOT APPEAR TO BE DOING ISRAELI BIDDING.

4. LEBANESE ARMY TO THE SOUTH THROUGH BEKAA. NEVERTHELESS, PLANS WERE BEING DEVELOPED FOR THE LEBANESE ARMY TO MOVE INTO THE SOUTH, WITH SYRIAN ASSISTANCE: LEBANESE ARMY WOULD MOVE PRIMARILY DOWN THROUGH BEKAA VALLEY TO MARJAYOUN, ESTABLISHING ITS OWN OUTPOSTS ON HILLTOPS OVERLOOKING ROUTE ALONG THE WAY. SYRIAN ARMY (WHOSE SOUTHERNMOST OUTPOST IS AT QARAAOUN DAM) MIGHT RUN RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS FURTHER SOUTH, BUT WOULD NOT ESTABLISH PERMANENT POSTS SOUTH OF PRESENT POSITIONS. SYRIANS HAD COMMITTED THEMSELVES AT LATTAKIA AND SINCE TO EXERT PRESSURE ON PLO, PRIMARILY FATAH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 03162 01 OF 02 081519Z

LEADERSHIP, NOT TO HINDER LEBANESE ARMY MOVE. FINALLY, POSSIBLE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE WOULD BE NEUTRALIZED BY MOVING SAIQA CONTINGENTS TO THE AREA. WOULD ALL THESE MEASURES BE SUFFICIENT TO PERMIT THE ARMY TO MOVE SOUTH WITHOUT MAJOR CONFRONTATION WITH THE PALESTINIANS, IF THE LATTER WERE DETERMINED TO RESIST? KHATIB SAID HE BELIEVED SO, BUT HE WAS NOT ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT.

5. OTHER ROUTES? KHATIB SAID THAT, IDEALLY, LEBANESE ARMY SHOULD MOVE SOUTH NOT ONLY THROUGH BEKAA AND VIA JEZZINE, BUT ALSO ALONG THE COASTAL ROAD VIA DAMOUR, SIDON AND ZAHRANI. THIS WOULD PLEASE ESPECIALLY CAMILLE CHAMOUN, WHO HAS A SPECIEL BRIEF FOR DAMOUR. HOWEVER, IT WOULD INVOLVE TOO MUCH DISPERSAL OF LEBANESE FORCES AND WAS THEREFORE OUT OF THE QUESTION. THE LEBANESE ARMY IS NOT GOING DOWN THE COASTAL ROAD TO THE SOUTH. EVEN THE MOVE SOUTH VIA JEZZINE AND NABATIYAH WAS CONTINGENT UPON POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH FATAH. KHATIB CONFIRMED THAT LEBANESE ARMY BARRACKS AT NABATIYAH WAS STILL UNDER CONTROL OF PRO-PALESTINIAN "LEBANESE ARAB ARMY" ELEMENTS. CHATEAU BEAUFORT WAS

ALSO FIRMLY UNDER PALESTINIAN CONTROL, AND THE
PALESTINIANS HAD NUMBER OF STRONGPOINTS THROUGHOUT
AREA. EMPHASIS OF LEBANESE ARMY PLANNING WAS ON THE
BEKAA-MARJAYOUN ROUTE.

NOTE BY OC/T: DISTRIBUTION COORDINATED WITH MR. TOBIN S/S-O.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03162 02 OF 02 090658Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 SS-15 SP-02 H-01 INR-10 IO-13 PM-05
NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 ISO-00
/070 W

-----130285 090702Z /23/45S

O R 081445Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8232
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 3162

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

6. HADDAD PROBLEM. IF LEBANESE ARMY IS TO MOVE INTO
SOUTH PRIMARILY THROUGH MARJAYOUN, IT WILL CONFRONT
AT THE OUTSET PROBLEM OF MAJOR HADDAD. KHATIB SAID HE
WAS CONFIDENT THAT THIS PROBLEM COULD BE WORKED OUT,
BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT DIRECT GOL CONTACTS WITH HADDAD
HAD NOT REPEAT NOT YET BEEN UNDERTAKEN.

7. COMPOSITION OF LEBANESE ARMY FORCES. KHATIB
CONFIRMED THAT TOTAL LEBANESE ARMY FORCE FOR THE SOUTH
UNDER CONSIDERATION WOULD NUMBER ABOUT 3,000 TROOPS.
A FIRST ELEMENT OF SOME 1200 - 1500 WOULD BE MADE UP OF
THREE BATTALIONS DRAWN FROM A NUMBER OF LOCATIONS, BUT
LARGELY FROM THE NORTHERN BEKAA.

8. TIMING. KHATIB SAID THAT THE HOPE WAS TO BEGIN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 03162 02 OF 02 090658Z

THE MOVE SOUTH ON JUNE 11 OR 12, THAT IS, BEFORE REPEAT
BEFORE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH IS
COMPLETED. HOWEVER, IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS, THE MOVE
WOULD NOT BEGIN UNTIL SEVERAL DAYS LATER.

9. DEALING WITH THE PALESTINIANS. KHATIB SAID IT WAS
AXIOMATIC THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY DID NOT AND WOULD
NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT FORCE TO TAKE ON PALESTINIANS IN A
DIRECT OUTRIGHT MILITARY CONFRONTATION AT NABATIYAH
OR ELSEWHERE. HE SAID THAT GENERAL KHOURY AND OTHER
LEBANESE ARMY LEADERS WERE COURAGEOUS AND WILLING
TO GO FIGHT THE PALESTINIANS, BUT THAT PROSPECT WAS
SIMPLY UNREALISTIC. SYRIANS WERE PRESSURING THE
PALESTINIANS TO BE COOPERATIVE, PARTICULARLY IN THE
COURSE OF MEETINGS WITH ABU IYAD AND OTHERS IN DAMASCUS
IN LAST THREE DAYS. ARAFAT AND REMAINING FATAH LEADER-
SHIP WOULD OF COURSE PLEAD INABILITY TO CONTROL THE
REJECTIONISTS AND LEFTISTS, BUT, "WE WILL HOLD THEM
RESPONSIBLE; WE KNOW THEY CAN CONTROL THE REJECTIONISTS
AND THE LEBANESE LEFTISTS, AND THEY KNOW WE KNOW."
KHATIB SAID FATAH LEADERSHIP WAS CURRENTLY PLAYING
A DOUBLE GAME WITH THE LEBANESE LEFTIST "NATIONAL
MOVEMENT," SUPPORTING THE LATTER'S ASPIRATIONS TO PLAY
A ROLE IN LEBANESE DOMESTIC POLITICS AND IN THE
FORMATION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY IN RETURN FOR ITS
RESISTANCE TO MOVEMENT OF THE ARMY SOUTH.

10. COMMENT: DESPITE SYRIAN REFUSAL TO CLOSE THE GAP
WITH UNIFIL, EVEN AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, KHATIB
BELIEVES SYRIANS ARE DEFINITELY INTERESTED IN SEEING
THE LEBANESE ARMY MOVE SOUTH, AND APPEAR WILLING TO
UNDERTAKE OTHER STEPS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE. ONE OF
THOSE STEPS, HOWEVER, IS POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING WITH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 03162 02 OF 02 090658Z

AT LEAST SOME PALESTINIANS.

11. OTHER SALIENT ASPECT OF THE PLAN APPEARS TO BE
THAT QUESTION OF WHAT TO DO ABOUT MAJOR HADDAD WILL HAVE
TO BE FACED AT THE OUTSET OF THE LEBANESE ARMY
DEPLOYMENT SOUTH, OR EVEN BEFORE. LEBANESE ARMY WILL
NOT REPEAT NOT FIRST MOVE INTO AREAS OF UNIFIL ZONE WHERE
NO CHRISTIAN FORCES OF MAJOR HADDAD ARE LOCATED. SINCE

CONTACTS WITH HADDAD HAVE NOT YET EVEN BEEN BEGUN, (AT
LEAST TO KHATIB'S KNOWLEDGE) CLEARLY THE FIX IS NOT YET IN.
LANE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, TROOP DEPLOYMENT, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT03162
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780239-1218
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780683/aaaactjc.tel
Line Count: 227
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fd3c408f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 3109, 78 BEIRUT 3127
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2444457
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EVOLVING LEBANESE ARMY PLANS FOR MOVEMENT SOUTH
TAGS: PDIP, PEPR, MARR, LE, SY, IS, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fd3c408f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014